

REMARKS

The present application was filed on April 6, 2000, and claims priority to U.S. Provisional Patent Application Serial No. 60/158,777, filed on October 12, 1999. Prior to the amendment herein, all of originally-filed claims 1-91 were pending. Also prior to the amendment herein, claims 1, 44, 90 and 91 were the pending independent claims.

Claims 33, 38, 77, 82 and 88 are indicated as containing allowable subject matter.


As a preliminary matter, Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's aforementioned indication of allowable subject matter.

Applicants have amended independent claim 1 to include the limitations of allowable dependent claim 33. Dependent claim 33 has been canceled. Similarly, Applicants have rewritten allowable dependent claim 38 into independent form by including the limitations of independent claim 1 as previously presented. Applicants have amended independent claim 44 to include the limitations of allowable dependent claim 77. Dependent claim 77 has been canceled. Similarly, Applicants have rewritten allowable dependent claims 82 and 88 into independent form by including the limitations of previously-presented independent claim 44. Applicants have amended independent claims 90 and 91 to include limitations similar to amended independent claim 1, i.e., incorporating limitations of dependent claim 33. Applicants note that these amendments have been made solely to expedite prosecution, and not due to any prior art.

The dependent claims are believed to be patentable at least by virtue of their dependency from the independent claims. These claims are also believed to define separately patentable subject matter.

In view of the above, Applicants believe that claims 1-32, 34-76 and 78-91 are in condition for allowance, and respectfully request favorable reconsideration.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William E. Lewis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "W" and "L".

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